

Ames Historical Society

AMES • IOWA

Newsletter to Members 2012 FALL.....ISSUE #4/4

*Discovering our history,
Preserving our past,
Sharing our stories.*



A.C. Gilbert developed the Erector set in 1913 with its unique square girder. The company continued to 1965 when it was purchased by the Gabriel Co.

Ames Historical Society Board:

| | |
|---------------------|----------------|
| Co-President | Mary Atherly |
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The Board meets the 2nd Thursday of each month 6:45pm at 416 Douglas. Members welcome!

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Interim Director | Casie Brockert |
| Staff | Dennis Wendell, Alex Fejfar |
| | Margaret Vance, Hannah Frederick |
| | Melissa Hymen |
| Facility Manager | Neal Tarman |

Ames Historical Society is an incorporated, 501c3 not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting interest in local and state history through publications, programs, exhibitions and operation of an archive and historic site.

Headqtrs: 416 Douglas, Ames, IA 50010
Open Wed-Fri, 1-5pm
Mail: PO Box 821, Ames, IA 50010
Phone: 515-232- 2148
E-mail: mail@ameshistoricalsociety.org
Website: www.AmesHistoricalSociety.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/ameshistoricalsociety

The **newsletter** is published four times a year for A. H. S. members. Direct comments and questions to: Editor, PO Box 821, Ames, IA 50010 or e-mail above.

Hoggatt School is located on the grounds of Meeker School, near 18th and Burnett, Ames, Iowa. Open April 1 through October 31.

A Holiday Memory: Christmas of 1936

by Morris Mericle, as remembered in 2012

Christmas of 1936 was hard for almost everyone.

Our family had lost their house to foreclosure and I spent a lot of time driving around with my dad while he looked for a loan. The money would allow him to refurbish a tiny house with an outdoor privy and make it suitable for four adults and us three kids. My mother's parents were the other two adults in the household.

Both my sister and I had contracted polio that year. We each had a long convalescence. Meanwhile, my parents were still recovering from the financial drain of a menopause baby who had been a surprise Christmas present the year before.

Several times that late fall my mother cautioned me to not expect much at Christmas. She reminded me that I was eleven now and she expected me to act like it.

On December 25th, we began opening the pitiful pile of presents. Carolyn was still too sick to care much what she got and Bob was just learning to walk and was happy just playing with the boxes and tissues.

When my turn came, my mother cautioned me once more about a lean Christmas and then pointed to a jacket hooked over the back of a straight-back chair. I bit my lip trying to be brave and hold back my tears of disappointment. I mumbled something like, "Gee, that's swell" as I lifted up the brown garment. It was then I saw what the jacket had been hiding: an 8 1/2 erector set, the largest size! It had probably cost \$14, a huge amount at that time. A prudent person could eat for two weeks on \$14.

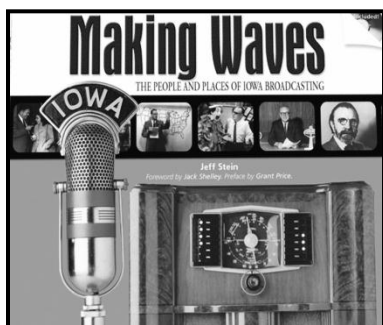
Only later did I learn that my dad had originally bought me a 5 1/2 erector set, only to learn from our neighbor that their son would be getting the 7 1/2 set. It was then that my dad took my present back and exchanged it for the best erector set offered. I think he needed to give it as much as I needed to get it.

Max, my playmate and I combined our two sets and built an exhibit that was displayed at the Iowa State Fair the next summer.

Both of us went on to excel at technical studies, and I traced our initial interest in construction and mathematics from that time on.



Announcing the 2013 Annual Lecture Series



Tuesday January 29, 7:00 pm

Making Waves: The People and Places of Iowa Broadcasting

by Jeff Stein, author, broadcast historian and university educator

Radio and television exploded onto the scene in the 20th century and changed our lives. Today, we can hardly imagine a day without broadcasting. The development of radio and TV in Iowa was ground breaking, and became the model followed by the rest of America. Stein will recount the earliest days of both radio and television in our state and will highlight developments in Ames.

Program funded by Humanities Iowa, a private, non-profit state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and in part by a grant from the Iowa Dept. of Cultural Affairs' Community Cultural Grant program.

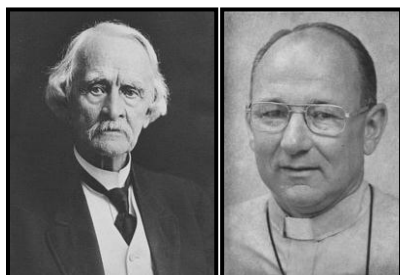


Tuesday February 26, 2013, 7:00 pm

Iowa Department of Transportation Centennial: 100 Years of Contributions to Ames, our State & the Nation

By Leighton Christiansen, DOT Archivist & Andy Loonan, DOT Field Services Coordinator

2013 marks the centennial of the Iowa Department of Transportation. Growing out of the Department of Engineering at Iowa State College as the Iowa Highway Commission, it first focused on roads, applying new methods to the nation's transportation infrastructure. The DOT later expanded to address all modes of transportation and continues to contribute engineering innovations. Join DOT staffers to learn the DOT's history and its unique connection to Ames.

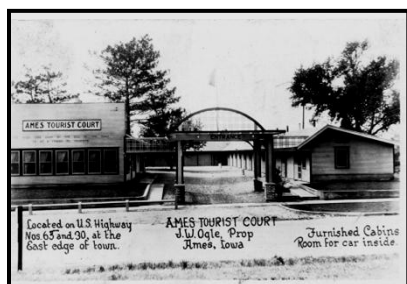


Tuesday March 26, 7:00 pm

Mavericks, Movers & Shakers, Minister: The Mayors of Ames

By Shannon Bardole, Ames Historical Society Researcher

Which mayor got into a fist fight with a city councilman during his term? Which mayor was featured on the front page of a nationally published magazine? Which mayor served four separate terms? Ames Historical Society researcher Shannon Bardole will present these stories and many more about our city's 42 mayors - and will invite a few tales from several of our more recent mayors.



Tuesday April 30, 7:00 pm

By the Side of the Road: Along the Lincoln Highway in Ames

by Jeff Benson, Lincoln Highway Historian

The Lincoln Highway was established 100 years ago in 1913 as the first trans-continental road in America. Its tremendous influence on local economies across the country can be seen in Ames, where businesses of all kinds flourished along the route. Highway historian, Jeff Benson, will provide a tour through time of what sprang up by the side of the road.

Free - Co-sponsored by the Ames Historic Preservation Commission

All our lectures will be at Ames City Auditorium, 520 Sixth Street, Ames, Iowa.

A \$3 freewill donation is requested at the door to assist with auditorium rental.

The Lecture Series is open to the public. Mark your calendars now and bring a friend!

Headquarters Happenings: Around 416 Douglas

Portrait Restored

On November 29, participating Ames Questers chapters gathered to publicize the completion of their most recent grant project, restoration of a 1933 painting by Bert Adams of his mother, Hilda. Jackie Smith, grant coordinator, is pictured in the same chair that Hilda posed in for the portrait! The style is clearly influenced by Bert's mentor, Grant Wood. The portrait is thought to be Bert's earliest oil painting. The grant plus donations from Ames Quester groups paid for the \$2995 restoration.

Skateland Collection

For many years, James Kathmann managed Skateland roller skating rink in Ames for Floyd Penkhus. In August, his son, Bill Kathmann and his wife and daughter from Monument, CO visited AHS to hand over a packet of nearly 80 photos relating to Skateland. He stretched his visit to recall some great times hanging out at Skateland and to sketch out a floor plan of the old rink. His daughter enjoyed teasing her dad about his photos in old Ames High yearbooks.



Barton Family Visit



On August 22, members of the Barton family visited. Long-time AHS member, Art Barton, has donated a bison skull and other artifacts to our collection. He came with his two brothers, Tom and Jon and Tom's wife and two daughters who have been living in Uganda. The girls had a lot of fun playing as many rolls as they could

on the player piano, an experience that was new to them. Art's mother, Mary, is well-known to quilters for her impressive quilt collection, part of which was donated to the State Historical Society in 1988.



Design Class Visits

In August, 34 students in two Iowa State Interior Design classes (above) visited to hear a program about two downtown buildings. They had been working with retail stores at 207 and 313 Main Street. After a short history hike and slideshow of downtown history that included stories about their assigned properties, they watched a show of Ames and ISU campus views that compared historic photos with contemporary ones.

We enjoyed this note from the instructor, Lisa Bates: *We would like to thank you for the wonderful presentations you gave the students. It was amazing to see all the changes the two sites have gone through and to understand the history of Ames Main Street. Also, we all enjoyed the presentation showing the ISU campus - such changes! Thank you for all your time and effort. The students learned so much about the Ames and ISU community.*

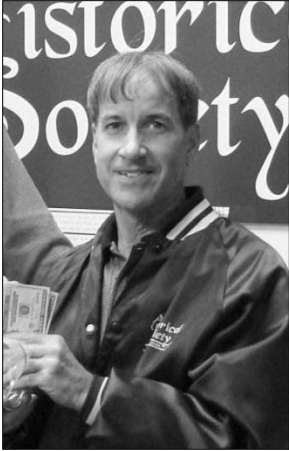
Mail from Washington

Donna Stanfill from Washington state was visiting her daughter at Des Moines University and drove to Ames looking for "interesting things." She noticed our sign and stopped in while scouting out Ames Public Library. She visited for nearly an hour before going to see the train exhibit at the Octagon.

She said, *"My serendipitous find of the Ames Historical Society was an enjoyable stop during my visit to Ames on Wednesday. I thought the railroad history was fascinating and was amused that some things political never really change! My last stop in Ames was the post office (after checking out the library and a few other places). I was very impressed by the mural and was equally impressed that I found detailed information about the mural on your website when I Googled "Ames post office mural."*



About Alan Spohnheimer



Many Society patrons and visitors have had the pleasure of meeting and working with our Administrator, Alan Spohnheimer. On August 31, Alan fell from the roof of a home in Ames and landed on a concrete driveway. He was critically injured, sustaining head injuries and other broken bones. After weeks in intensive care, he was moved to a rehab facility where he is re-learning basic life functions

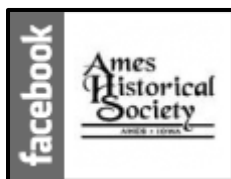
- walking, talking, swallowing. He is making progress but it is slow and exhausting.

Alan's wife, Gina, has been faithfully at his side and she writes daily updates about his condition and progress at www.caringbridge.org/visit/alanspohnheimer. Friends may leave messages for Alan and his family on that site. In addition, Alan's website is www.spohnheimer.com. His siblings have set up an account ("Fund for Alan Spohnheimer") at US Bank, 405 Main Street, Ames, IA 50010, for those who'd care to help with expenses.

Society curator, Dennis Wendell said it well: *"The staff, volunteers, members and board of Ames Historical Society wish Alan a full and timely healing. The Society's appreciative and loyal clientele will remember his genuine, welcoming presence, authoritative response to questions, thoughtful input to decision making, passionate approach to local history and singular dedication to our mission. He has been central to the creation of our exceptional website as well as compelling PowerPoint presentations, engaging programming for youth and relevant weekly archival photos for the Ames Tribune. We honor his dedication by striving to offer services that meet his level of excellence."*

The Ames Historical Society is fully staffed and remains open to serve the public from 1 to 5 pm Wednesday, Thursday and Friday afternoons. Staff will also respond to email questions at: mail@ameshistoricalsociety.org.

We're on Facebook!
"Like" us and follow us there:
www.facebook.com/ameshistoricalsociety



Meet Casie Brockert



Stepping in as the Society's Interim Administrator with Alan's absence is Casie Brockert.

Casie interned with us in the summer of 2011 and we were impressed with her eagerness to learn, her dedication and her ability to bring assigned projects to completion.

She graduated from the University of Northern Iowa in December 2011 after seeking as many opportunities as she could to learn about museum operations and procedures. In January, she began volunteering for the Society and when the half-time Assistant Administrator position opened up in May, she was the obvious choice.

Since September 1, Casie has been working full-time as Interim Administrator and in addition to Research Assistant, Margaret Vance and Curator, Dennis Wendell, the staff has been augmented with several new hires. Assisting in all areas of operation are Alex Fejfar, Hannah Frederick and Melissa Hymen.

Alex is a May 2011 Iowa State graduate in History with coursework in computer science. He will be working half-time while juggling several other part time jobs. His immediate focus has been our oral histories and other media material in the collection. We are excited about Alex's technical skills and enjoy his friendly personality.

Hannah is a December 2009 Iowa State graduate in history. She works one day/week for us while working nearly full-time at Wheatsfield Grocery. She hopes to attend graduate school in museum studies one day and has been an active Society volunteer on her day off. We are pleased to have her enthusiasm and organizational skills as paid staff, even if it's just one day a week.

Melissa Hymen is an Iowa State student that we were able to hire through ISU's College Work Study program. Melissa performs custodial chores and is an expert scanner, creating digital material for many uses. Melissa is a junior in Forestry.

We hope our members will stop in to meet these new members of our staff.

The Mayor Exhibit

An idea put forward by Mayor Ted Tedesco back in 2006 has become reality! At that time, Ted suggested a city hall exhibit that would highlight all those who have served as mayor.

The idea was kept alive by Councilperson, Riad Mahayni and in 2011, city funding was provided to ensure the project's completion.

Over time, the "mayor project" was researched by Alan Spohnheimer, Margaret Vance, Dennis Wendell, Mike Schuster, Marti Rasmussen, Conrad Lawlor, Gloria Betcher and her husband Doug Biggs, and it was finally brought to the finish line by Shannon Bardole. Shannon is a volunteer who comes to us one day/week, squeezing in a few hours around her full-time job. Shannon focused on the display for over six months, refining research material and creating display panels.



When the 42 panels were finally ready, John Forth, city hall maintenance, invented the hanging scheme and installed the display.

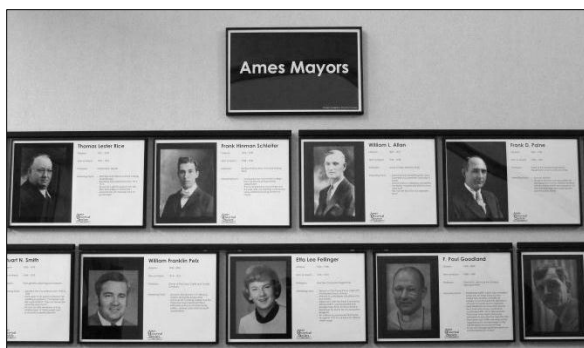
Each poster features the mayoral term, the person's profession and key accomplishments or events during that person's term. It's an amazing timeline of city

progress! Most panels also have a picture of the person, but in some cases, we simply were not able to find one.

We are working now to get all the panels up on our website, but that will take a little time.

In addition, Shannon will be one of our lecture series featured speakers, talking about the mayors on Tuesday, March 26, 7pm at City Auditorium.

The exhibit can be viewed any time City Hall is open, and is on both sides of the atrium stairwell.



"Mayor Project" contributors: L to R: Shannon Bardole, former mayor Ted Tedesco and researcher, Gloria Betcher.

NAMI Award

Each year the Central Iowa National Alliance for Mental Illness presents an award to an organization that has partnered with them to help community members affected by mental illness. In October, Ames Historical Society received the Outstanding Partner Award for the welcome provided when they moved into our building as a first-time tenant and for the special accommodations that were made for those using wheelchairs and walkers. Kathy Svec, center, received the award.

Director Deb Niehof said, "We feel so privileged to have



you as our "landlord" as well as our neighbor. We regret that Alan will not be able to receive the award, since he has helped us out in many ways, large and small.

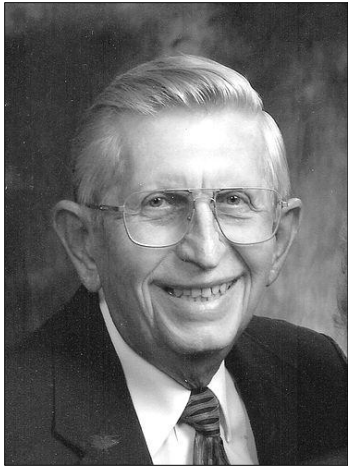
However, we hope that Alan will be told about the award and how much his help and warm smile has meant to us."

Civil War Program Online

The program presented in May of readings from Kendrick Brown's Civil War diaries can be viewed online any time at



In Memory of Rollie Struss



Long time Board member and Society volunteer, Rollie Struss, passed away on August 17, 2012.

With his passing, Ames and ISU have lost an icon and the Historical Society has lost a quintessential supporter and friend.

Rollie's faithful service on the Ames Historical Society's board was exemplary. He was an inspiration on the capital campaign team where he earned his famous nickname "The Impatient One." Rollie always urged us to "get it done!"

Rollie guaranteed a legacy for the Bauge family and the central Story County pioneer era through his tireless efforts in helping to restore the Bauge Log Home, Hoggatt School and artifacts associated with each. His drive and enthusiasm were truly exceptional and his vision for a permanent museum absolutely steadfast through the decades. Rollie, with his wife Willie, functioned as an inseparable and superb team.

Rollie's engineering skills provided many working drawings for projects and his woodworking skills resulted in shelving units that are still used for storing artifacts.

He received BS degrees in both chemistry and mechanical engineering from the University of Nebraska and an MS in nuclear engineering from Iowa State University. Rollie started his career at Sandia Corporation in Albuquerque, NM and then joined the staff at Ames Laboratory, working from 1962 to 1996.

Rollie was a true renaissance man. He and Willie bought a small farm north of Ames, where they raised livestock and farmed crops. For fun, he created detailed wood carvings; he painted; he restored antique clocks and other antiques. A mechanic to his core, no repair was too complicated: if Rollie couldn't fix it, it wasn't broken!

He had a limitless curiosity and genuine interest in everyone he met and took great joy in every adventure he undertook.

At Ames Historical Society, he continues to inspire!

New Roof at Hoggatt School

Badly needed repairs to the roof and ceiling at Hoggatt School have been completed.

Work on the project occurred between August 29 and September 21. The project involved the Meeker School principal, school facilities staff, a DMACC building trades instructor and his students, and the main contractor, Tom Richards.

- The DMACC personnel provided their labor to remove shingles and plywood at no charge
- Ames schools facilities staff donated usage of a dumpster
- Significant cracking of the original rafters had occurred over time, probably due to the weight of the ceiling being tied to the rafters – so the roof rafters were stabilized and support for ceiling weight was added
- New shingles were applied directly on the spaced sheathing, avoiding the addition of new plywood.
- Minor chimney repairs were performed
- The small adjacent storage shed was in disrepair and was removed. Inside were found approximately 35 creosoted wooden paving blocks used in paving Ames streets around 1910!

The State Historical Society of Iowa's Country School Grant Program funded about half of the cost, and donations to fund the repairs are still being sought.

Members wishing to contribute to the project may use the donation form on the last page of the newsletter.



RAIL Reality

how the
Trains
made AMES

Train Exhibit a Great Success!

The Society's grand exhibit honoring the legacy of the railroad in Ames was a great success! Over 450 people attended the five train-related programs and the hosting organization, the Octagon Center for the Arts, reported double the number of people who usually view exhibits. Additional adult and youth groups also toured the show as well as Ames community school district classes. Display materials will be archived for future use. The model of The Dinky will be displayed at the ISU Library through May.



Rudy Daniels, right, spoke in August about the Railway Post Office, dressed in an official conductor's uniform.



Steam locomotive #844, going under the 6th Street bridge.

On September 9, over 1,000 people toured the Union Pacific's vintage steam locomotive #844 during its visit to Ames, more than at either the Iowa State Fair or Boone's Pufferbilly Days!



Bob Folkmann, Margaret Vance, Peggy Baer, Kathy Svec and Bob Bourne hosted #844 visitors on September 9.

Museum Shop

Many unique items!



Mary Jo Mattila's – Ames From A to Z

Corn husk doll kits & marble sets

Vintage handkerchiefs and handkerchief dolls kits

vintage postcards

Publications from the C&NW Historical Society

Open wed-Fri 1-5pm or by appointment

Updated Mission, Vision, Values

Ames Historical Society Mission Statement

Discovering our history,

Preserving our past, Sharing our stories.

Our mission is to engage our diverse public and provide unique opportunities to learn about Ames history. We carry out this mission by maintaining an archive, artifact collection and website, providing research assistance, exhibits, tours, programs and publications and operating an 1860s one-room schoolhouse museum.

Vision Statement

To make Ames history compelling and relevant to current and future generations, we envision an Ames History Center that is known for its exemplary standards of welcome and hospitality where visitors experience quality presentations that reveal the unique Ames story.

Values

- In all interactions with the public, we value accuracy, openness, transparency, stewardship and respect for those that embody the Ames story.
- We value strategic partnerships and collaborations with our cultural peers (libraries, archives, art centers, museums, media, and more).
- We value professionalism and adherence to museum standards.



Banners for Sale!

The beautiful Union Pacific Sesquicentennial banners that hung on downtown light poles during the run of the exhibition are for sale at \$20 each. Two styles are available – one with a vintage locomotive and one with a modern engine. Call 515-232-2148 for information.

End-of-the-Year Appeal

We are so grateful to members who responded to our 2012 year-end appeal. Your generosity will set the stage for exciting developments in 2013!

Is it time to renew your membership?

Renewals are due on the one-year anniversary of last year's payment. Check this newsletter's label for information about your membership. Memberships fund the day-to-day operations of the Society, allowing us to continue to be a valued community resource. We thank you!

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------|------------------------|------------------|
| Introductory - 1st year | \$10 | Sustaining | \$100 |
| Individual | \$25 | Sustaining Plus | \$101-500 |
| Family | \$40 | Benefactor | \$500 |
| Friend | \$50 | Patron | \$1,000 |

Name _____

Address _____

Ames Historical Society, PO Box 821, Ames, IA 50010

Hoggatt School Repairs Contribution

Yes! I'd like to help out with the Hoggatt School roof and ceiling repair project with the donation indicated below.

Amount _____

Name _____

Address _____

**Mail to: Ames Historical Society,
PO Box 821, Ames, IA 50010**

Return Service Requested

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